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ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	INL-01	DODE-00
DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-01	FBIE-00	VC-01	H-01
TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00
OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	R-00	PMB-00
DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/010W	

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5825  
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002204

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR PFLAUMER

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2010

TAGS: PREL ZI US SF WA MZ ZA PGOV

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR POTUS TO ENGAGE MUGABE BY  
TELEPHONE ON CURRENT DISTURBANCES IN ZIMBABWE

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD FOR REASON 1.5  
(D).

¶11. (C) RECENT, PRESIDENTIALLY DIRECTED EVENTS HAVE TAKEN ZIMBABWE TO THE VERGE OF CRISIS. WE BELIEVE A STRONG AND HIGH-LEVEL MESSAGE APPEALING FOR CALM, RESTRAINT AND A RETURN TO DEMOCRACY AND RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS IS CRITICAL. IN THIS CONNECTION, I STRONGLY URGE THAT PRESIDENT DELIVER SUCH A MESSAGE VIA A TELEPHONE CALL AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY TO PRESIDENT ROBERT MUGABE.

¶12. (C) WITH THE PROBABILITY OF BEING DRIVEN FROM OFFICE BY THE FIRST VIABLE OPPOSITION CHALLENGE IN TWENTY YEARS, ROBERT MUGABE HAS UNLEASHED A REIGN OF TERROR AGAINST THE RIVAL MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) AND THIS COUNTRY'S WHITE FARMERS. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE BELIEVES THE LATTER TO BE BANKROLLING THE OPPOSITION PARTY AND HELPING TO RECRUIT AND ORGANIZE ITS RURAL CONSTITUENCY. MUGABE HAS USED MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR VETERANS' ASSOCIATION AND THE STATE SECURITY APPARATUS TO PERPETRATE THE VIOLENCE. IT IS A HARDLY SPONTANEOUS OR NATIONAL MOVEMENT; MOST RIGHT-THINKING ZIMBABWEANS ARE REPelled BY THE FARM OCCUPATIONS. WITHIN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS TWO MDC PARTY OPERATIVES WERE KILLED IN A FIREBOMB ATTACK ON THEIR

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VEHICLE, TWO WHITE FARMERS WERE FATALLY SHOT, A SCORE WERE BEATEN TO WITHIN AN INCH OF THEIR LIVES, AND OSTENSIBLE WAR VETERANS RAPED A PAIR OF WHITE WOMEN IN THEIR FARMHOUSE NEAR HARARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE "WAR VETERANS" HAVE BATTERED HUNDREDS OF BLACK FARM WORKERS; STOLEN OR DESTROYED THEIR PROPERTY, AND KILLED AN UNKNOWN NUMBER. TO THEIR CREDIT, THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION HAS INSTRUCTED ITS MEMBERS NOT TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE, TAKING SOME OF THE POTENTIAL FOR EXPLOSION OUT OF THE OPERATION, AND MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THE OBJECTIVE VIEWER TO DECIDE WHO IS AT FAULT. THE POLICE, AT MUGABE'S INSTRUCTION, HAVE LARGEly STOOD ON THE SIDELINES AND PASSIVELY WATCHED THE SPECTACLE OF INJURY AND DESTRUCTION.

¶13. (C) WHILE MUGABE AND THE LEADERS OF THE RULING ZANU-PF PUT THE VIOLENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF REMOVING THE LAST AND MOST UNJUST VESTIGE OF COLONIAL RULE, THE OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, IN OUR JUDGMENT THE STRUGGLE IS ALL ABOUT POWER: WHO GETS IT AND WHO KEEPS IT. THE PRESIDENT

STANDS TO LOSE SOME OF IT IN THE STILL UNSCHEDULED PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. IF THE RULING PARTY LOSES ENOUGH SEATS, SAY OVER 50 PERCENT, MDC LEADER MORGAN TSVANGIRAI TELLS US THAT MUGABE WOULD STEP DOWN,

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UNACCUSTOMED TO GOVERNING WITH AN OPPOSITION THAT WOULD ACT AS A REAL CHECK TO UNTRAMMELED EXECUTIVE POWER. MUGABE'S VIEW OF POWER IS MANICHEAN: EITHER YOU HAVE IT ALL OR YOU HAVE NOTHING. MOREOVER, THE ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT MUST KNOW THAT THERE ARE MORE THAN ENOUGH PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE WITH A GOOD REASON TO KILL HIM, AND THAT AS AN EX-PRESIDENT HE WOULD NOT LAST LONG, AT LEAST

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STAYING IN THE COUNTRY HE HELPED FOUND. THEREFORE, WE THINK THAT HE WILL NOT CALL FOR AN ELECTION UNTIL HE IS CERTAIN THAT HE WILL WIN IT OVERWHELMINGLY. IF HIS POLITICAL NOSE TELLS HIM THAT CONDITIONS DO NOT EXIST FOR THAT OUTCOME TO OCCUR WITHIN THE TIME FRAME PRESCRIBED BY THE CONSTITUTION, THERE IS SUFFICIENT TURMOIL IN THE COUNTRY FOR HIM TO DECLARE MARTIAL LAW OR A STATE OF EMERGENCY, WHICH HE COULD USE TO SCRUB THE ELECTION AND RULE BY DECREE.

**14.** (C) WE HAVE MADE A NUMBER OF DEMARCHE TO MINISTERS AND EVEN TO PRESIDENT MUGABE HIMSELF TO ENFORCE THE LAW. I HAVE PURSUED OUR DONOR COLLEAGUES WITH VIGOR TO WEIGH IN JOINTLY WITH US TO THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT, BUT HAVE HEARD NOTHING BUT DEMURRALS, TEMPORIZING, AND EVEN A CLEAR "NO;" THEY ALL WANT THEIR CAPITALS TO TAKE THE LEAD. I THINK THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO RATCHET UP THE PRESSURE UNILATERALLY. THE NEXT STEP, IN MY VIEW, IS TO REQUEST THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE A TELEPHONE CALL TO MUGABE. I MUST STRESS THAT IT NEEDS TO BE NOTHING LESS THAN A TELEPHONE CALL, AS A LETTER COULD VERY WELL BE IGNORED (MUGABE WOULD KNOW THAT IT HAD BEEN DRAFTED BY A SUBORDINATE AND LIKELY NOT EVEN SEEN BY THE

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PRESIDENT. ALSO, THE CLEARANCE PROCESS MAY RESULT IN A MESSAGE THAT IS EITHER EQUIVOCAL OR TOOTHLESS. WHAT IS OCCURRING HERE DEMANDS MORE. WHILE POTUS HAS NOT DIRECTLY ENGAGED MUGABE IN THE PAST, I BELIEVE THAT HIS PERSONAL WARMTH, STYLE, AND DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT TO AFRICA WILL GO A LONG WAY. IF THE PRESIDENT IS UNAVAILABLE, THEN STRONG CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ASKING VICE PRESIDENT GORE TO PLACE THE CALL.

**15.** (C) THE PRINCIPAL PITFALL IN A TELEPHONE CALL IS THAT MUGABE WILL MAKE AN EFFORT TO DRAW THE PRESIDENT INTO A DEBATE ON THE LAND ISSUE IN ZIMBABWE, AND THE

USG'S OSTENSIBLE OBLIGATIONS IN THAT REGARD. WE WOULD URGE THAT THE PRESIDENT STEER AWAY FROM THE TOPIC TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, AND FOCUS ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S VIEW OF RECENT EVENTS IN ZIMBABWE AND WHAT IT COULD MEAN DOWN THE ROAD. WITHOUT MINCING WORDS, THE BEST TACTICAL APPROACH IN THIS CONVERSATION WOULD BE TO EMPHASIZE HISTORY'S VIEW OF LEADERS: THE LAURELS FOR THOSE WHO ARE LARGE ENOUGH TO RISE TO THE DEMANDS OF A SITUATION, VERSUS BRICKBATS OR OBLIVION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BLINDED BY SHORT-TERM CIRCUMSTANCE. MUGABE VALUES HIS LEGACY AND MAY WELL PROVE MOST RECEPTIVE TO AN APPROACH ALONG THESE LINES. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD STRESS TO MUGABE THAT:

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-- WHILE NOT PULLING PUNCHES WITH REGARDS TO U.S. CONCERNs ABOUT SUCH ISSUES AS THE GOZ'S FAILURE TO UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW AND MUGABE'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT CAN BE READ AS AN INCITEMENT TO RACIAL OR POLITICAL VIOLENCE, WE HAVE MADE CLEAR OUR DESIRE TO WORK WITH ZIMBABWE BOTH TO ADDRESS THE STILL-UNRESOLVED LAND ISSUE, AND TO HELP HALT THE COUNTRY'S DOWNWARD ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SPIRAL;

-- AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, MUGABE'S FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO ENSURE THAT THE RULE OF LAW IS UPHELD;

-- THE U.S. VIEWS ZIMBABWE AS A FELLOW DEMOCRACY, AND THAT IN DEMOCRACIES PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT AND FREEDOM TO CHANGE THEIR GOVERNMENT VIA THE BALLOT BOX; AND

-- THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC MORASS, SINCE FARMERS, ESPECIALLY NEW ONES, NEED PEACE, PREDICTABILITY AND BANK LINES TO PLOW THEIR FIELDS AND REAP THE FRUITS OF THEIR EFFORTS.

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